

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 7-10, and 13-14 are amended and claim 19 is newly added. After entry of this amendment, claims 1-19 will be pending.

Applicant notes that the Examiner has not considered the references cited in the Form-1449 filed April 9, 2001. Applicant has re-submitted the references along with a new IDS dated May 19, 2004.

Claims 7-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being incomplete. Applicant respectfully submits that the clarifying amendments to claim 7 overcome the rejection by positively setting out acts performed in the claimed method. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 7-12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as unpatentable over Kobayashi. Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments to claims 1, 7 and 13 overcome this rejection. Claim 1 recites, in part, that predetermined identifiers are allocated to the connection terminals. That is, for a given physical connection, there is a predetermined identifier that relates to a device priority order. In contrast, Kobayashi appears to disclose a system in which priorities are dynamically assigned by a microprocessor unit. The physical connections are not determinative of either the device type (as recited in, e.g., claim 2 of the present application) or the priority within that type. See, e.g., Col. 6, ln. 20 – col. 7, ln. 7. In fact, even the addresses of the physical locations of the nodes in Kobayashi are dynamically assigned based on the parent-child relationships of the network elements. Col. 6, ln. 60 – col. 7, ln. 7. This system is the opposite of a system in which specific connection terminals are associated with a predetermined identifier that is used to control the apparatus connected thereto, according to a priority order based, at least in part, on the predetermined identifier. Claims 7, 13 and 19 each contain similar recitation to claim 1 regarding the predetermined identifier and are each therefore patentable over Kobayashi for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) based on Kobayashi be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 8 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kobayashi in view of Ogino. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claims 2, 8 and 14 depend from claims 1, 7 and 13 respectively and are patentable for at least the same reasons. As stated in the office action, Ogino teaches the use of variable IDs which may change as apparatus are added to or removed from the system, not predetermined IDs. See,

O.A., p.5. Thus, Ogino fails to overcome the deficiencies of Kobayashi discussed above. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 2, 8 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Kobayashi and Ogino be withdrawn.

Claims 3-5, 9-11 and 15-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over "Kobayashi v. Zou" (sic) and further in view of Johas Teener. Applicant presumes that this is a typo and that the intention is a rejection based on Kobayashi in view of Ogino (which has Zou as a second inventor) and further in view of Johas Teener. Applicant respectfully submits that Johas Teener fails to overcome the deficiencies of Kobayashi and Ogino. Specifically, Johas Teener does not teach or suggest a system in which specific connection terminals are associated with a predetermined identifier such that a priority between devices is predetermined based, at least in part, on the predetermined identifier. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 3-5, 9-11 and 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Kobayashi, Ogino and Johas Teener be withdrawn.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Applicant has addressed all of the outstanding rejections and objections and respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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